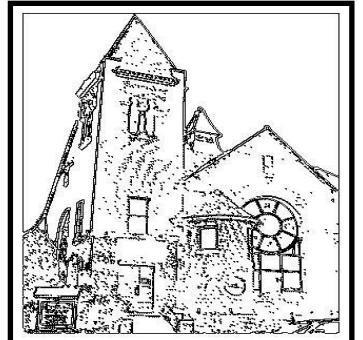


First Congregational
United Church of Christ
420 Wilson Ave.
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 235-5838
e-mail: office@menomonieucc.org
website: menomonieucc.org

The Bell

January 2022



January Events

- 1/3: Office Closed for New Year's
- 1/4: 6:30pm Executive Committee (Rm1)
- 1/5: 6:30pm OWL
- 1/11: 6:30pm Church Council meeting (FH)
- 1/16: Guest Speaker Laura McLeod - ONA
- 1/23: Guest Speaker Andrew Werner
- 1/26: 9am Ladies Who Paint

Sundays: Worship at 8:15 & 10am

Thursdays: 4pm Kid's Club

6:30pm CAFÉ

5-6pm Thursday's Table to-go

Ladies Who Paint

Come join the "Ladies Who Paint" from First Congregational United Church of Christ for a day of outdoor art! Whatever your medium, share your artistic flair and have some fun playing with color. Bring your acrylics, oils, watercolors, pastels or adult coloring books! We will meet in the **Room 1** on **Wednesday, January 26** beginning at 9 a.m. until we're done.

AA Meetings:
Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 6:30am

Monday: 6pm Alanon

NA Meetings:
Wednesdays and Fridays: 7:15pm
Saturdays: 6pm

End of Year Financial Statements

We will be sending out your 2021 year-end giving statements no later than January 21st, 2022. We plan to send them electronically to all those whose emails we have. ***If you would prefer to receive your statement by regular mail, please contact Teresa Lyall at office@menomonieucc.org or 715-235-5838 no later than January 14th.*** to let her know your preference

Anticipate the Coming of... Stewardship Season!

January and February mark the time when we, as members of this congregation, begin to think about our pledge to the church for the coming year. Giving is central to a life of faith. It's part of how we love one another. As part of our spiritual commitment, we give to organizations and individuals that further the work of love, healing, justice and peace in the world. All such stewardship and mission matters. Our gifts to this church make possible our mission of worship, teaching, learning and serving. During our stewardship season, which will begin on January 30th, we will reflect together on the commandment to love—and on how we can love God, neighbor and creation through giving of our time, talent and treasure.

From the Pastor's Desk
Hope Lingers Here

Dear First Congregational family,

The powerful refrain of our Advent and Christmas Eve theme song continues to echo in my mind and resonate in my heart:

*I will not hate, and I will not fear
In our darkest hour, hope lingers here.*

A former mentor of mine used to make a sharp distinction between hope and optimism. When we are optimistic, we believe there will be a positive outcome to our present situation and we act accordingly. When we hope, on the other hand, we keep faith with the future even when a positive outcome seems unlikely. Hope is something we embrace *in spite of* circumstances, not because of them.

Hope can take many forms. Sometimes, hope is expressed in the dogged commitment to keep putting one foot in front of another—carrying out one's daily duties in spite of the strong temptation to give up. It can be seen in members of a sports team who continue to play their hearts out even while it looks likely that they will lose. Only those who commit to playing their best no matter what make possible a win in the final seconds of a game.

Hope is what drives someone to escape a dangerous situation, to overcome daunting odds, to keep working for freedom in the face of repression. And hope, as a spiritual and theological commitment, is rooted in the belief that the creative Source of our lives will continue—in the face of all evidence to the contrary—to create new possibilities and new conditions for life. The future is not closed. Despair is not the final word.

We all need hope these days. Hope in the face of COVID-19 and the Omicron variant; hope in spite of threats to democracy and justice; hope in the midst of spite and division in our body politic; hope despite family tragedies and illness, climate change and economic uncertainty.

We will find that hope, not in the predictions of futurists or the nightly news, but by digging deep into our souls for the God spark that will not be extinguished. We will find it by grasping the determination to persevere. We will live it out as we continue to love our families and our neighbors, care for our own needs, lift our voices in gratitude and praise, and serve the greater good in whatever ways come into our daily path.

Hope lingers here. Know it. Live it. Grasp it fiercely.

Hoping with you,



Pastor Kathleen

January Worship

Sunday, January 2: 8:15 & 10am

Communion

Sunday, January 9: 8:15 & 10am

Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday, January 16: 8:15 & 10am

Guest Speaker Laura McLeod

Just Peace/ONA

Scripture: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Sunday, January 23: 8:15 & 10am

Guest Speaker Andrew Werner

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Sunday, January 30: 8:15 & 10am

Third Sunday after Epiphany/

Stewardship Sunday

Scripture: Luke 4:14-21

Flowers:

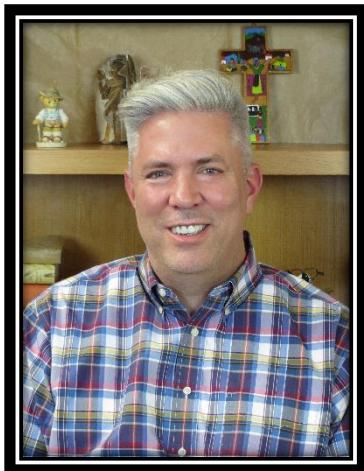
Please sign up on the flower chart if you would like to provide flowers for celebrations or in memory of someone. There is a new chart up for the year.

Sunday, January 16th – Just Peace and ONA Sunday – “Epiphanies of Justice”

This year, on MLK Jr. weekend, we will celebrate not just our annual Just Peace service—but our ONA service as well. It is appropriate, on occasion, to combine these two themes, because they are closely intertwined. On January 16th, guest preacher Rev. Laura McLeod will share the message with us—and following the service, she will give a presentation and take questions. Rev. McLeod is chair of the Wisconsin Conference UCC Committee on Ministry with LGBTQ Persons and has served as Pastor of Brookfield Congregational Church since November 2016. Prior to her call to Brookfield, she served Delavan United Church of Christ Congregational in Delavan, WI. Rev. McLeod has years of experience serving small town and rural congregations who have made commitments to being Open and Affirming and engaging in anti-racism work.

Sunday, January 23rd – “Epiphanies of Gratitude”

Our church touches our lives in so many ways. Planned giving is one way to give back to our congregation and the wider community. Rev. Andrew Warner – Director of Development for the Wisconsin Conference UCC - will talk about the reasons and the ways people make gifts in their wills and other planned gifts. Join us on Jan. 23 after worship to learn more about how you can making a lasting impact on a community that enriched your life.



Rev. Andrew B. Warner, CFRE, serves as Director of Development for the Wisconsin Conference. He leads the fundraising efforts of the conference, supports the planned giving and effective philanthropy of congregations, and started a foundation. Andrew also serves as a Generosity Outreach Officer of the national setting of the United Church of Christ. In that role he trains, coaches, and mentors conference and congregational leaders to strengthen the culture of generosity across the UCC. Andrew connects people's deepest passions with generative opportunities and initiatives.

Previously, Andrew served for twenty-two years as pastor of Plymouth Church UCC of Milwaukee. He loves to cook and entertain, a practice he calls his “gastro-evangelism.”

Unfolding Changes in Faith Formation – from Pastor Kathleen

I'm happy to remind you that our new Director of Faith Formation, Karen Miller, begins her work with us on January 4th. She will be working with the CE Committee, myself, Abby and others to shape faith formation and educational opportunities for all ages. You'll be hearing more from her as plans begin to take shape—and as we figure out how the next wave of COVID-19 may impact how those opportunities are provided.

Until we hire a permanent Youth Program Coordinator, Abby Berthiaume will continue to serve that role in an interim capacity. We're grateful for as much time with Abby as possible—and please keep your eyes, ears and hearts open for possible people to step into that role by this spring at the latest.

Welcoming Gail Skamfer and Rick Bauer

After months of searching, the Custodian Search Committee has reached a successful—and novel—conclusion to their search. We have contracted with Rick Bauer for basic weekly cleaning services. He will typically be in the building on Mondays and Fridays, although he will adapt his hours around the schedule with his other clients. And our much-loved Gail Skamfer has agreed to keep us cared for and laughing by working 5-8 hours per week on maintenance and periodic cleaning tasks. She will maintain communications with the Property deacons, the staff and our various vendors related to maintenance. Her hours will be flexible, and she will still have freedom to travel and spend time in warm climes with Lori. *Please welcome Rick and Gail when you see them!*

Dear members of First Congregational UCC and loyal friends,

December 27, 2021

During one of our Advent worship services we sang or hummed

The "Canticle of Turning" refrains,

"My heart shall sing of the day you bring,

 Let the fires of your justice burn.

Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,

 And the world is about to turn."

(Rory Cooney, Irish tune)

While we wait for the dawn of COVID's end, protect ourselves, support one another, and wipe away falling tears, on behalf of our "Let's Keep the Bell Ringing" Capital Campaign Committee, I wish to thank all who have already generously contributed to renovate our historic building and to mitigate water leakage around our fellowship hall windows. As 2021 comes to an end, we also want TO GENTLY REMIND YOU to submit your annual pledges to our current capital campaign; you may want to consult with your investment counselor to determine how you might take advantage of transferring stocks or funds from an investment program, as part of your pledge.

The good news is presently the current campaign has received \$199,090.85 in pledges or initial gifts, but the bad news is our Property Deacons have identified a source of water infiltration around the Bell Tower in our historic building. That problem also will need to be repaired this summer.

We look forward to continuing our work together on our building, our compassionate care for one another, and our efforts to serve the wider Menomonie Community with dawn breaking ministry.

Gratefully Yours,

The Capital Campaign Committee, Wendy Dittmann, Toby Ellison, Sue Foxwell, Bill Grambo, Bill Olson, and Brent Skinner

Did you look closely at our Christmas tree in the sanctuary during Advent and the Christmas season?
Did you notice the rather odd homemade ornaments? Do you know what they are? They are called CHRISMONS. The word Chrismon is a combination of the words "Christ" and "monogram". Our Chrismons were crafted by Fanny Quilling over 50 years ago and our tradition is to use them every year to decorate our tree. The designs of the Chrismons are symbols of Christianity and traditionally all in white and gold. The first Chrismons were created in 1957 and displayed on the Christmas tree at the Lutheran Church of Ascension in Danville, VA. The patterns were shared and the tradition of their use spread. Our Chrismons are showing their age but are a special link to historical symbols and a very special member of our congregation.



Symbol of Jesus as King of Kings



Symbolizes the Holy Trinity



The IHS cross, the first 3 letters of the name Jesus in Greek, on a Greek cross



The Iota Chi Lily Cross. Lily of the valley represents Jesus, daisies symbolize the innocence of Baby Jesus, and the X stands for the humility and purity of the man, Jesus.



The cross with Alpha and Omega symbols

Our Sympathy to:

Kristen Billingsley and her family, her dad, Jeff Hoag, passed away on December 8, 2021.

Flora Lehman, her husband, Laverne Ausman, died Monday, December 13, 2021

Thank you to:

- Deb Wesolek, Bonnie Trimble, and the whole Tour committee for a wonderful, innovative, "Tour of Homemade Goods"
- All those who read for worship during the many worship services in December: Sally Johnson, Naomi Cummings, Margy Ingram, Connie Flug, Carol Ropella, Nita Fitzgerald
- Our singers and special musicians: Mary Burkett, Nita Fitzgerald, Kim Blomquist, Susan Hall, Pinckney Hall, Dawn Ascher, Annie Simpson, Eve Simpson, Liam Patterson, Abby Berthiaume, Richie Price, Isaiah May, Ellen Ochs, Heather Jerrie, Noah Anderson, Deanna Schultz, and many members of the choir
- Advent and Christmas Eve candle lighters: Melissa and Aly Kluge, Marlann and Liam Patterson, Abby Berthiaume and Toby Moszer, Mae, Annie and Eve Simpson, Nell, Camden & Tehya Johnson
- Kathy Colvin, Deb Wesolek, Sally Conklin, Margy Ingram and Mary Burkett for attending to worship décor during Advent and Christmas.
- Mary Burkett for being our "Christmas Elf of Hope" throughout Advent, spreading messages of Hope throughout the church and beyond
- Ron Welsch and the Custodian search committee and Cheryl Huenink of Personnel for their work on finalizing the contract for cleaning services with Rick Bauer and a new custodian job description for Gail Skamfer
- Deb Challe and the MCYF Search Committee and Cheryl Huenink of Personnel for their work to finalize the hiring of Karen Miller as our new Director of Faith Formation
- Dave Ottman for always going above and beyond his Livestream Coordinator job description, and Bill Burkett and Amy Riddle-Swanson, tech nest volunteers extraordinaire!
- Margy Ingram, for her beautiful graphics work on our worship slides and banners, our "musical meditation" images for our December 26th service, and for creating new welcome signs with a Christmas theme
- Ron Fry, for stepping up with his usual skill and promptness to keep our sidewalks shoveled and clear!
- Our Council leaders, especially Ellen Ochs, our moderator, for leading us through some challenging conversations and keeping us on track

Tour of Homes Update

As co-chairs of the annual *Tour of Homes* event, we would like to thank all the heads of various committees and those who worked to make this year's "*Tour of Homemade Goodness*" a success. With many changes to the event and a lot of creative thinking, the *Tour* made \$4,500 – what a SUCCESS during this year's challenges! During 2022 this money will be distributed to various community organizations as well as to meet the needs of the church.

Thank you also to the following people who donated items to the Raffle:

Denise Skinner – Porch Pot made by Denise

Jill Noreen- Handcrafted Quilt

Linda Hamm – Nativity Scene made by Linda daughter, Lisa's, company

Neil Koch –Hand crafted Squirrel Feeder

We thank all those who attended and contributed effort to this year's *Tour*, which created a fun and festive event. We are looking forward to the 2022 Tour of Homes.

Bonnie Trimble and Deb Wesolek

First Congregational UCC, Menomonie, Wisconsin
Church Council Meeting Agenda
November 9th, 2021, IN PERSON
Fellowship Hall

Roll Call (those underlined were absent): Jon Blomquist, Deb Challe, Sally Conklin, Toby Ellison, Judy Fry, Pinckney Hall, Margy Ingram, Karen Miller, Ellen Ochs, Amy Riddle-Swanson, Jill Schwebs, Margi Stauss, Agnes Welsch, Ron Welsch, Kathleen Remund

- I. The Meeting was Called to Order at 6:37pm by Moderator, Ellen Ochs in the Fellowship Hall of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Menomonie, WI.
- II. Kathy Colvin provided Communion Training for all Council members including instructions on using pre-packaged Hosts. Kathy provided each Council member an illustrated instruction booklet detailing the steps in the service of the Sacrament of Communion.
- III. Sally Conklin moved to approve the minutes from the Church Council meeting of October 12, 2021 and Judy Fry seconded the motion. **Motion Approved**
- IV. Treasurer's Report – Pinckney Hall
 - a. Overview of Balance Sheet—Lookin Good!
 - i. (Line #1.000.001) Dairy State Checking (\$39,049.83) is a little larger than normal. (two members paid their year's pledge in total).
 - ii. Line #1.000.008) Capital Campaign (\$250,004.23): combined accounts with \$5K held out for dishwasher earmark (see September Bell article)
 - iii. (Line #3.000.101) General Fund (\$33,355.28) is current spendable amount: Checking balance minus Total Liabilities
 - b. Overview of Treasurer's Report--also lookin' good! As of October 31, we are 50% of the way through our fiscal year, and our income is at 56%.
 - c. Income items of possible interest:
 - i. (Line #4.000.001) Pledge income is above "expectations" (50%) at 57%
 - ii. Several items in the Line #4.000.... tier are high.
 - iii. Planned Giving (Line #.012) share is for general church use.
 - d. Expense items of possible interest:
 - i. Salary/personnel expenses pretty much <50% with total at 46%
 - ii. Overage in office supplies is expense for bulletin paper
 - iii. Total Property Expense is at 47%.
 - e. Jill Schwebs moved to receive the Treasurer's Report, Margi Stauss seconded the motion. **Motion Approved.**

- V. Reports:
 - a. Clerk – Margy Ingram - *Report on file*.
 - b. Ordained Minister – Kathleen Remund- *Report on file*.
 - i. Pastor Kathleen is starting a mentoring relationship with Jill Christopherson as her mentor. The Wisconsin Conference is funding this experience.
 - c. Moderator – Ellen Ochs

- i. On behalf of Mary Burkett, Ellen encouraged members of the Council to participate in the four-day Facebook protest log out. The information was shared through email.
- d. Past Moderator – Toby Ellison *no report*.
- e. Vice Moderator – Amy Riddle-Swanson
 - i. Still working at finding a new head usher

VI. Deacons

- a. Care Ministries – Margie Stauss - *Report on File*
- b. Christian Ed. – Deb Challe – *Report on File*
 - i. Heritage Sunday plans were discussed including:
 - 1. Kids cutting out leaves for leaves of Thankfulness
 - 2. Kids will sing, present leaves, and participate in Children's Message
 - ii. Hiring moving forward. Council should receive a proposal soon.
- c. Membership/Fellowship – Judy Fry
 - i. Heritage Sunday activities include:
 - 1. Leaves of Thankfulness in the Parlor and Sanctuary
 - 2. muffins and cider, activities in Fellowship Hall
 - 3. butter making in the basement
 - ii. Tour of Homes - Tour of Homemade Goodness - December 4, 2021
 - 1. No homes, no tea, but raffle, gifts and baked goods in the Fellowship Hall.
- d. Mission for Peace and Justice – Karen Miller *nothing new*
- e. Music – Agnes Welsch
 - i. Organ recital
 - 1. Saturday, November 13th 11:15 am
 - 2. Evelyn Rohrbach will play
 - 3. Twin Cities Chapter of the American Guild of Organists sponsors.
- f. Personnel – Toby Ellison *Didn't meet*
- g. Property – Jon Blomquist/Ron Welsch
 - i. Church Clean-up went well last Saturday
 - ii. Committee members doing lots of small jobs
 - iii. Custodial Proposal *on file*
 - 1. Ron and Jon presented a proposal from a Cleaning Service interested in providing Custodial Services for us.
- h. Amy Riddle-Swanson moved and Jill Schwebs seconded that the Council of-First Congregational UCC retain the services of Mr. Rick Bauer per his proposal, on the condition that he provides current proof of Covid-19 vaccination prior to his first day of work and, on Teresa's return, the church receives an acceptable background check. **Motion Approved.**
- i. Stewardship
 - i. Budget – Dream – Due by January 9, 2022

- j. Thursday's Table – Jill Schwebs
 - i. Served almost 100 meals last week (Breakfast for dinner)
 - ii. Moved into the foyer to keep the staff from freezing
- k. Worship – Sally Conklin *Report on File*
 - i. Heritage Sunday work of many
 - ii. Christmas Eve Service
 - 1. 4:30pm – 100 people cap
 - a. Little Nativity and Cloth for the Cradle
 - b. Lessons and Carols
 - 2. Preregistration
 - a. Deadline
 - b. Masked and distanced, vaccinations
 - 3. Livestream and recorded
 - 4. Amy Riddle-Swanson moved that the Christmas Eve service be limited to a maximum of 100 preregistered, masked, and distanced participants with vaccinations recommended. There will be no congregational singing except last two hymns w/masks. Ron Welsch seconded the motion. **Motion Approved**
- l. Approval of Additions to Funerals & Memorials Agreement
 - i. Judy Fry moved, Margi Stauss seconded that we approve the Funerals & Memorials Agreement and farther those changes concerning Livestreaming Services can be made without seeking Council approval. **Motion Approved**
- m. Progress on hearing aid solutions – waiting to be on Nick's schedule
- n. Progress on audit: recruited Rose McLean, Bill Grambo, Pinckney Hall, _____
- o. New Council photos to be posted on Photo Board –

VII. New Business

- a. Discussion about implementing Outreach – by Pastor, by deacons, by members - to motivate, to plan, to get others involved – to build community

VIII. Next Executive Committee Mtg. December 7th Room 1, in person;

IX. Next Council Meeting December 14th

X. Minute of silence -

XI. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Margy Ingram, Clerk